

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced more than \$10 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants aimed at revitalizing hard-hit El Paso County neighborhoods and helping people get into affordable housing.

“This program is a prime example of Stimulus dollars going into needy communities and improving the quality of life for people while also creating new job opportunities,” said Congressman Rodriguez. “Not only will there be an immediate advantage as vacant houses are rehabilitated, but new jobs will inject a long-term benefit into already distressed neighborhoods.”

The El Paso Collaborative for Community & Economic Development, which services El Paso and Hudspeth Counties in the 23rd Congressional District, received \$10,191,000. Other Texas organizations include Habitat for Humanity International, Inc., which received nearly \$28 million and Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., which received more than \$15 million.

The Texas grants are part of a broader \$2 billion package of grants nationwide, announced Thursday by U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan. The funding, part of HUD’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program, will go to states, local governments and non-profit housing developers. In announcing the grants, Secretary Donovan said the funding will help stabilize hard-hit communities by turning vacant homes into affordable housing opportunities.

“Vacant homes have a debilitating effect on neighborhoods and often lead to reduced property values, blight and neighborhood decay,” Secretary Donovan said in a statement. “The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a key part of the Obama Administration’s comprehensive approach to address the national housing and economic crisis.”

Joanna Guillen, Asset Development Director for the El Paso Collaborative for Community & Economic Development, said her organization is excited to work on this project that is expected to bring relief to targeted neighborhoods in the El Paso County area.

□ **“The design of the project offers a win-win situation for hard-hit neighborhoods, prospective homebuyers, and low-income renters,” Guillen said. “We believe this public/private partnership administered by a local non-profit organization and Community Development Financial Institution will help HUD achieve the stated goals of this project.”** Guillen said the funds will go projects in 22 eligible census tracts scattered throughout the greater El Paso area, including the communities of **Horizon City**, **Clint** and **Tornillo**.

The NSP grants will help state and local governments and non-profit developers collaborate to acquire land and property; demolish or rehabilitate abandoned properties; and offer down-payment and closing cost assistance to low- to middle-income homebuyers. Grantees can also create “land banks” to assemble, temporarily manage, and dispose of foreclosed homes, according to HUD.

The awards will require housing counseling for families receiving homebuyer assistance funds through NSP and will protect homebuyers by requiring grantees to ensure that new homebuyers under this program obtain a mortgage from a lender who agrees to comply with sound lending practices.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program was created to redevelop hard-hit communities, create jobs, and grow local economies by providing communities with the resources to purchase and rehabilitate vacant homes and convert them to affordable housing.

Last year, HUD awarded nearly \$4 billion in NSP formula funds to over 300 grantees nationwide to help state and local governments respond to the housing crisis and falling home values.

For more information, visit

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg

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